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Programme 24. Administrative services

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24.1 The overall objectives of this programme are to provide an effective administrative structure and services in support of the substantive programmes of the Organization and to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Organization in the administrative, financial and human resource support and conference servicing areas.

24.2 The Secretariat seeks to achieve these objectives by:

(a) Ensuring sound financial management of the resources of the Organization;

(b) Effective management of the human resources of the Organization;

(c) Assuring continued essential services in the areas of security and safety, information technology support and telecommunications, procurement and transportation services and building management, as well as archive and record management services;

(d) Coordinating and developing the global provision of conference services.

24.3 The Department of Administration and Management at Headquarters and the United Nations Offices at Geneva, Vienna and Nairobi are responsible for the implementation of this programme and for the achievement of its objectives.

24.4 The mandate for the programme lies in the responsibilities entrusted to the Secretary-General by the Charter of the United Nations, specifically Article 97, which designates the Secretary-General as the chief administrative officer of the Organization. In addition, the Financial Regulations and Rules, the Staff Regulations and Rules, the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation, and General Assembly resolutions 41/213, 42/211, 43/213, 44/200, 45/254, 46/232, 47/212, 48/218 on the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations provide the basis for carrying out the objectives.

Subprogramme 24.1 Management services

Financial management, contributions and treasury

24.5 The financial situation of the Organization will continue to require very close attention. The non-payment and late payment of assessments to the regular budget, peace-keeping operations and international tribunals have precipitated the current financial crisis and have undercut capacity to implement activities. At the same time, effective management of the limited financial resources available to the Organization, which necessitates constant monitoring of established financial policies and procedures and the revision of financial policies as circumstances warrant, is more essential than ever.

24.6 This part of the subprogramme is implemented by the Financial Management Office, the Contributions Sections and the Treasury in the Office of the

Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management. The objectives related to this part of the subprogramme are:

(a) To promote intergovernmental agreement on measures to overcome the long-standing financial problems of the United Nations, including the scale of assessments;

(b) To improve the timeliness of receipt of assessed and voluntary contributions;

(c) To enhance the quality of management information, as well as to permit the earliest possible issuance of periodic and ad hoc reports to Member States on the financial situation;

(d) To improve the capacity to monitor and forecast the Organization's cash flow and to develop strategies to deal with anticipated problems in that regard;

(e) To improve and strengthen financial management and internal control, and to maintain close liaison and follow-up with the Board of Auditors and the Office of Internal Oversight Services so as to ensure that remedial action is taken whenever and wherever required;

(f) To ensure the timely receipt and safe custody of cash resources;

(g) To increase the earnings potential of funds under management;

(h) To improve the payment systems in order to streamline processing, reduce costs and enhance security;

(i) To enhance control mechanisms that protect the payment systems, bank account balances and investments of the Organization;

(j) To ensure that cash concentration benefits are achieved.

Administration of justice

24.7 The Staff Regulations and Rules regulate decision-making with regard to the contractual situation, obligations and entitlement of all international civil servants. Given the diverse background of the staff, the assurance of its efficiency and morale is particularly dependent on the transparency of procedures and equality of treatment. Furthermore, the jurisdictional immunity of the Organization legally obligates it to have just and effective internal administration processes.

24.8 This part of the subprogramme is implemented by the secretariat of the Joint Appeals Board and Joint Disciplinary Committee, the Panel of Counsel and the Panel on Discrimination and Other Grievances in the Office of the Under-Secretary-General. The related objectives are:

(a) To ensure and facilitate the functioning of an effective internal justice system in the Secretariat;

(b) To advise the Secretary-General on the final decision on any appeal by staff members against an administrative decision or against disciplinary action;

(c) To provide administrative support services to the bodies designated for recourse and disciplinary matters: Joint Appeals Boards, Joint Disciplinary Committees, Grievance Panels and Panels of Counsel;

(d) To examine and resolve allegations of discriminatory treatment and other staff grievances by amicable settlement;

(e) To provide administrative support services to the Panels of Counsel in advising and representing staff members before the bodies designated for recourse and disciplinary matters.

Subprogramme 24.2 Programme planning, budget and accounts

24.9 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from Article 17 of the Charter of the United Nations and from the Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations, the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning, the Programme Aspects of the Budget, the Monitoring of Implementation and the Methods of Evaluation and, in particular, General Assembly resolutions 41/213, 42/211 and 49/233 and the biennial resolutions on unforeseen and extraordinary expenses. The subprogramme is implemented by the Office for Programme Planning, Budget and Accounts.

24.10 The objectives of this subprogramme are:

(a) To ensure sound financial management of the regular budget, peace-keeping and extrabudgetary resources of the Organization and the effective monitoring and management of the cash flow;

(b) To facilitate intergovernmental deliberations and decision-making on relevant aspects of planning, programming, budgeting and accounts of the Organization, for regular budget, peace-keeping and extrabudgetary activities;

(c) To improve the translation of legislative mandates into plans and programme budgets that facilitate the effective management, implementation and monitoring of the Organization's activities and expenditures, in order to accomplish the objectives of the programmes;

(d) To strengthen and improve the administration of, and compliance with, the Financial Regulations and Rules, the Regulations and Rules Governing Programme Planning and the Programme Aspects of the Budget and other policies and directives to ensure proper and economical use of the resources of the Organization;

(e) To ensure accuracy and timeliness in the maintenance of all accounts of the United Nations;

(f) To strengthen and improve the administrative and budgetary aspects of peace-keeping operations with a view to ensuring efficient and cost-effective use of resources;

(g) To improve the application of budgetary techniques, methodology, procedures and guidelines for the regular budget, peace-keeping budgets and extrabudgetary resources;

(h) To improve accuracy and timeliness in the collection and recording of financial data, financial reporting and payments/reimbursements to Governments, vendors and other contractors and staff;

(i) To facilitate the deliberations and decision-making of the Secretary-General's Advisory Panel on Management and Finance;

(j) To improve the administration of the group health and life insurance programme and the procedures for the settlement of claims for property loss and damage, and compensation for injuries, illness or death attributable to the performance of official duties on behalf of the Organization.

Subprogramme 24.3 Human resource management

24.11 The legislative authority for the subprogramme derives from Articles 8, 100 and 101 of the Charter of the United Nations and from a series of General Assembly resolutions.

24.12 The primary objective of this subprogramme is to continue to develop, implement and sustain a modern human resource management system that ensures that the global Secretariat can respond dynamically to the needs of Member States. The Office of Human Resources Management, working with managers worldwide, is responsible for achieving the objectives of this subprogramme, which are:

(a) To develop human resource management policies to underpin a management culture that enables staff to perform to their maximum potential in an output-oriented global Secretariat through a fully operational work-based performance appraisal and management system; a supportive, harassment-free work environment; empowerment of managers through delegated authority, in an operational system of accountability, responsibility and recognition; and streamlined and clear regulations, rules and procedures to enhance efficiency, transparency, consistency and communication in their application;

(b) To undertake strategic human resource planning, drawing on the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) through the development and introduction of streamlined organizational structures, job and staff skill inventories; effective vacancy management and staffing contingency planning systems; and succession planning schemes;

(c) To examine recruitment methods and improve responsiveness to global Secretariat needs and to ensure the expeditious filling of vacancies, while identifying high-calibre recruits and ensuring the broadest representation of Member States;

(d) To strengthen further the provision of comprehensive operational services through the integrated delivery of services responsive to the needs of

managers and staff in the global Secretariat and development of emergency response teams for improved responsiveness in emergency situations;

(e) To maintain responsive health and wellness programmes to ensure physical and mental fitness of staff with a view to improved staff morale and productivity;

(f) To develop, raise awareness of and monitor the implementation of policies and strategies to achieve gender balance and provide equal opportunity for all staff;

(g) To improve conditions of service by ensuring competitive salaries, adequate allowances to recognize mobility and hardship service conditions and other compensation elements, and by taking effective action on work/life issues in order to attract and retain high-quality, high-performing staff;

(h) To design and conduct training programmes to develop and maintain staff capacities and skills enabling the global Secretariat to adjust to changing organizational needs and achieve mandated goals through the use of versatile staff with up-to-date and high-calibre professional knowledge and competencies, including thorough cross-training; a complement of mission-ready staff, who are prepared for intense conflict situations, including conflict resolution; and staff with stronger organizational, management (especially people management) and administrative skills;

(i) To continue to develop an effective internal system of justice directed towards the rapid and professional reconciliation of disputes and the efficient handling of appeals and disciplinary cases.

Subprogramme 24.4 Support services

24.13 The overall objectives of this subprogramme are to ensure continued essential services to support substantive programmes and conferences, in the areas of security and safety, information technology support and telecommunications, procurement and transportation services, and building management, as well as archive and record management services.

Security and safety services

24.14 In the field of security and safety, the objectives are:

(a) To ensure the protection of individuals and property at all duty stations;

(b) To strengthen security strategies in order to provide a safe environment in which the Organization can carry out its work;

(c) To improve the training programmes for field security staff;

(d) To monitor inspections of offices away from Headquarters.

Integrated Management Information System and information technology services

24.15 A strategic technology plan for the Organization is being developed to serve as a strong and reliable worldwide infrastructure for data processing, office automation and telecommunications, achieving economies of scale through the application of standards in all areas. This strategic plan will also provide the framework for all areas of the Secretariat to allow for a coordinated and consistent approach in the development of their applications while maintaining the flexibility required for their specific activities.

24.16 The infrastructure developed for the implementation of IMIS will form the basis for the establishment of the overall information technology of the Organization. The use of the system by other entities of the United Nations system will also require the establishment of a mechanism to facilitate the harmonization of policies and procedures among organizations and to pull resources together for the maintenance and expansion of the system.

24.17 The objectives in this area are as follows:

(a) To develop a strategic technology plan;

(b) To complete the transition to modern technologies both in the area of data processing and in telecommunications;

(c) To consolidate the implementation of the Integrated Management Information System.

Buildings and commercial services

24.18 The objectives of building management are to provide effective and efficient planning, management, maintenance and operation for all existing premises, infrastructure and electronic broadcast and conference engineering expertise, and support to all meeting facilities at Headquarters locations.

24.19 The objective of commercial activities is to provide efficient and effective management for the income-producing activities of the United Nations, including the catering and gift shop operations. For the Postal Administration, the objectives are to publicize the work of the Organization and its specialized agencies through the sale of postage stamps and to optimize income by developing better marketing strategies.

Procurement and transportation

24.20 The procurement and transportation function has been restructured to provide the Organization with a more responsive, expeditious and cost-effective procurement of goods and services for Headquarters, regional offices and field missions. A truly competitive, fair and transparent procurement process is to be maintained under the improved arrangements.

24.21 The objectives of this area are as follows:

(a) To achieve an optimal match between resource input and service output through training, a rotation system between Headquarters and field missions, and participation in various trade seminars and conferences sponsored by professional recognized associations;

(b) To achieve an optimal level of efficiency through the elimination of unproductive and unnecessary tasks;

(c) To develop and maintain a vendor database with the intent of deleting outdated information;

(d) To seek new suppliers through solicitations to Member States and to provide responses to new suppliers' direct applications;

(e) To develop a computer program that will generate a random listing of registered suppliers by commodity for use during bidding exercises.

Subprogramme 24.5 Conference services

24.22 The basic mandates for the provision of conference services are contained in the rules of procedure of the main organs of the United Nations. Additional mandates are found in the resolutions adopted regularly by the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on the pattern and calendar of conferences and on the control and limitation of documentation.

24.23 Overall intergovernmental direction concerning the provision of conference services is given by the General Assembly on the advice of the Committee on Conferences, in accordance with Assembly resolution 43/222 B of 21 December 1988, which established the terms of reference of the Committee.

24.24 In the field of planning, development and coordination of conference services, the main objectives will be:

(a) To improve the global planning and coordination of conference services;

(b) To develop and implement such new conference-servicing policies, procedures and practices as may become necessary in view of the changing activities and requirements of the Organization;

(c) To ensure that intergovernmental bodies, special conferences and Member States in general have access to meeting and documentation services in accordance with the resolutions and rules establishing language arrangements for the various bodies and organs of the United Nations;

(d) To upgrade the technological capacity in conference services in line with new developments in technology.

24.25 Relevant instruments to achieve these objectives include the preparation of the draft calendar of conferences, scheduling of meetings and documentation, provision of substantive support to the Committee on Conferences and

participation in conference planning missions. Improved workload statistics, performance indicators and cost information will be developed and monitored, and technical advice and support will be provided for the planning and introduction of technological innovations in conference services and the upgrading of existing systems.

24.26 In the field of translation and editorial services, the main objective will be:

(a) To ensure that the proper mix of permanent, temporary and contractual staff and adequate technological resources are available so that documentation produced in all six official languages is of high quality and is issued in a timely fashion, in strict observance of the resolutions and rules establishing language arrangements for the various bodies and organs of the United Nations;

(b) To increase the efficiency and to improve the quality of the translation and editorial services.

24.27 During the period covered by the plan, self-revision will be used within reasonable limits safeguarding quality standards. There will be increased reliance on contractual translation through a gradual expansion of the roster of contractors. By the end of the period, it is expected that wide access to reference and terminology databases and the electronic transmission of texts will facilitate the work of translators and editors and permit more efficient modes of work, including expanded workload-sharing among conference centres, thereby improving quality, timeliness and cost-effectiveness.

24.28 In the field of interpretation, meeting and documentation services, which include interpretation, verbatim reporting, text-processing, correspondence, copy-preparation and proofreading, electronic documentation, reproduction and distribution activities, the main objectives will be:

(a) To provide meeting and documentation services in a timely, efficient manner while maintaining a high standard of quality;

(b) To ensure the timely and efficient production, distribution and storage of documents and publications in the official languages of the Organization.

24.29 To achieve these objectives, the application of advanced computer and communications technology will continue, in order to establish an appropriate balance between printed and electronic products, to set up new electronic links in the production process, from initial submission of documents to reproduction, distribution and storage, and to develop the remote provision of interpretation and verbatim reporting services. External printing will be reduced through use of desktop publishing in all official languages and, when cost-effective, in-house reproduction capacity. The reproduction and distribution functions will be streamlined as print runs are reduced with widespread access to electronic documents stored on optical disk and an expanded capacity for printing on demand.